

Bird (F. W.)

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BEFORE THE

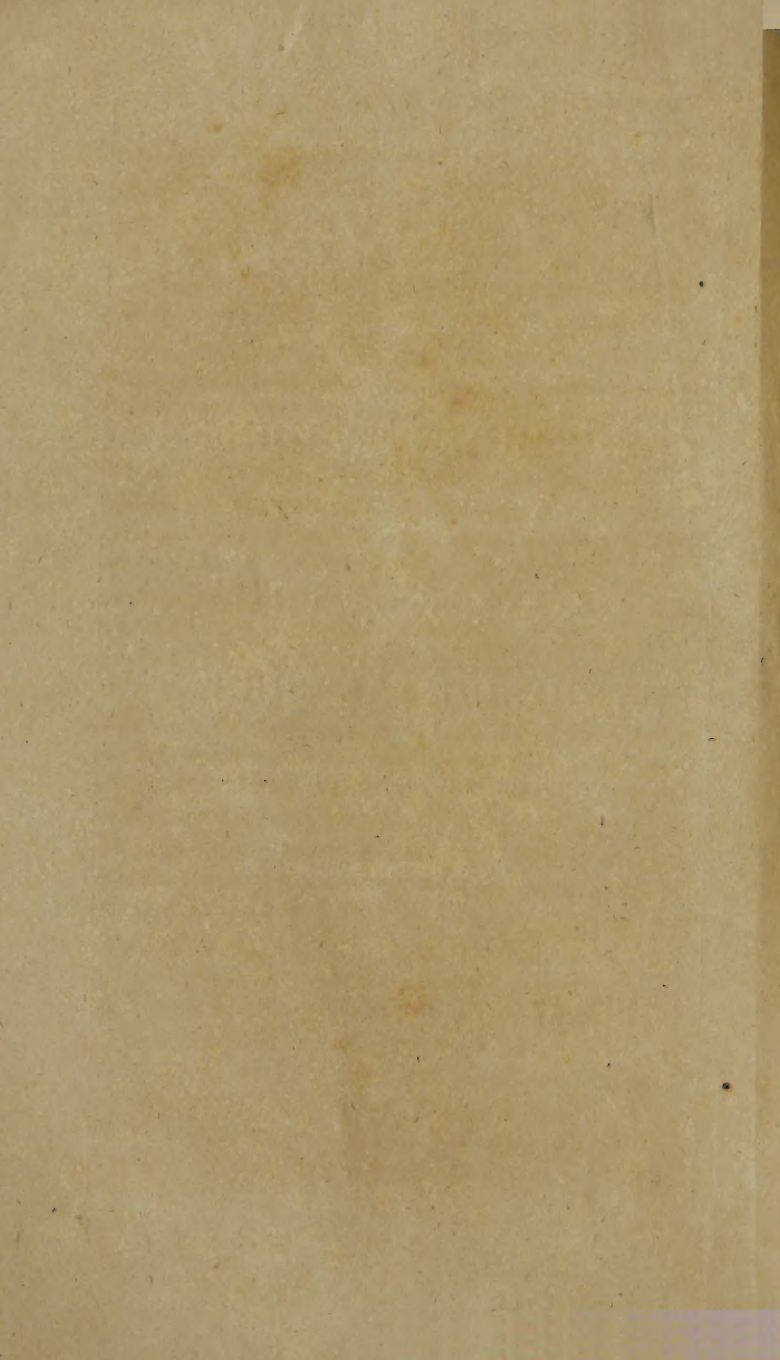
AMERICAN

PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

AT THEIR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING,

JUNE 1, 1837.





PHYSIOLOGICAL REFORM.

AN

ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

AT THEIR FIRST ANNUAL MEETING,

JUNE 1, 1837.

BY F. W. BIRD, ✓

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PREFACE.

THE following remarks were written without the most distant expectation that any request would be made, except, perhaps, as a matter of mere etiquette, for a copy for publication, and with a determination, should such a request be made, to resist it *in limine*; and it is only to the repeated solicitations of the Society, before which the Address was delivered, in addition to the advice of some partial friends, that the writer, in violence of his honest convictions, now gives it to the public. Upon its merits, as a literary production, he would anticipate and disarm criticism. It was written when the mercantile community of this section of the country was in a state of unprecedented and fearful excitement; *

“All which I saw, and part of which I was ;”

and it has been hastily re-written—while yet the troubled elements are not settled down into their wonted calm, and while he has been very much engaged in the duties of an honest, (probably his readers will say a more appropriate) calling. He is well aware that it is deficient in that unity of plan, logical arrangement, and polish of style, which are essential to a finished performance. But, for the principles it advocates, he offers no apology. He has attempted, indeed, to exhibit the subject in too many of its bearings, and therefore many points are unfinished and open to criticism; but the general principles, startling and absurd as they may appear to some, are, he honestly believes, correct; and he invites and challenges for them a most searching scrutiny.

* Called, by some, the voice of the sovereign people; by others, the ten cent rebellion.

A D D R E S S .

THE object of all science is the investigation of the laws of the universe—the discovery and the application of TRUTH.

All investigation is founded upon the principle that the laws of nature are universal in their extent, and uniform in their operation. The Creator placed, in the beginning, every part of his creation under the operation of law ; and if there be a spot in this wide creation where law does not reign—if there be a single occurrence taking place in violation of, or even independent of the control of law, there creative energy was never yet exerted, and there omnipotent power is now defied—on that spot there is no GOD. And not only are the laws of nature universal, but they are also uniform. The universe was made by an infinitely wise being, prompted by infinite benevolence, and guided by that infallibility which needed not the successive experiments which are requisite to give excellence to the works of finite man.

We may hence infer, that the laws, under which the universe was then placed, were adapted, in all respects, to promote its best possible interests ; and

that these laws have never been, and never will be, repealed or altered. When, therefore, a law in any department of science is discovered, it may be inferred with undoubting certainty, that that law will stand as long as the present constitution of things exists. Neither Chance, nor Fate, nor even Providence, acting without regard to law, are known to science. Whenever any of these come in, law ends, and chaos reigns.

How beautifully uniform are all the operations of the natural world. When, since the creation, has the law of gravitation been suspended, except by a miracle?—Witness, also, this uniformity in astronomy. For six thousand years the heavenly bodies have performed their revolutions with such unalterable regularity, that the astronomer can tell with certainty how many, and when eclipses have occurred since first “the morning stars sang together;” and with equal certainty he will predict every phase which sun or moon shall exhibit, and every transit or occultation of every planet and star until the consummation of all things.—The same uniformity, though not so clearly open to the observation, extends to the operations of chemistry.—Thus, go where we will, throughout the natural world, we find law controlling all events—the vast and the minute; alike directing the eternal torrent of Niagara, and forming the dew-drop which glitters for a moment in the morning sun.

This same uniformity obtains in the spiritual world; and although, from the abstruseness of the subject, psychological investigation proceeds slowly, and discovery lingers, yet we never dream of doubt-

ing that all the intellectual faculties, all the social affections, and all the moral feelings are, in their development, and growth, and exercise, under the control of strict laws ; and we rely upon the deductions from a sufficiently extensive and cautious generalization of their phenomena, with as entire a confidence, as we do upon the laws of the physical world.

Nor is it ever doubted that man is endowed with capacities for discovering and applying these laws, at least so far as they have any bearing upon his own welfare. Uninclined, indeed, he may be, in his cherished earthliness of feeling, to contemplate the lofty interests of his spiritual nature, and therefore voluntarily incapable of comprehending perfectly its laws ; yet neither his imperfections nor his depravity can blot those laws from the statute-book of Heaven. Law had an existence previous to the present constitution of things ; she hath still "her seat in the bosom of God ;" and whether understood or not, whether obeyed or disobeyed, the laws of man's physical nature will stand as long as the present system of nature endures, and the laws of his spiritual being will never be annulled, but will acquire new sanctions as eternity demonstrates their adaptation to man's immortal interests.

All this will be readily admitted, simply because it is obvious that to deny it amounts to a denial of creative wisdom and directing providence, and strikes at the root of all science. Deny it in any part of creation, and we are at once driven to practical atheism. And yet this great principle is practically rejected. It is freely admitted in all other departments

of science ; but when we attempt to apply it to human life, and affirm that God hath put the whole human family under one constitution, we are told that the principle is a false one. "What is one man's meat is another man's poison !" "It may suit you, but it doesn't suit me !" Nay, the principle is admitted in vegetable physiology ; and agriculture, as a necessary consequence, is acquiring a new importance, and achieving new triumphs ; and it is beginning to be admitted even in animal physiology, as far as the brute creation is concerned ; but for man there is no law,—and in human physiology, a science next to moral science, most intimately connected with man's highest interests, and worthiest of his most profound investigation, there are no settled principles. It is a fatal fallacy. It renders hopeless all attempts to meliorate the physiological condition of the human race, cuts off every generation from all advantage which might be derived from the experience and the investigations of preceding generations, degrades the science of physiology to a system of blind experiments, and leaves man at the mercy of a reckless empiricism. Can it be true ? Every where else, investigation, properly conducted, receives its due reward ; but the health, the life, the happiness of man, the noblest of all the creatures of God, are subject to no law, and can be secured by no system of means ; and all attempts to discover the laws of the human constitution, and to deduce from those laws general rules for the government of human life, and the observance of which shall in all cases secure the greatest possible amount of human happiness, are utterly vain.

There seems, indeed, to be felt a necessity for some law to regulate human life. There seems to have prevailed a suspicion that this fallacy was striking a link from the otherwise perfect chain of universal law: and hence a necessity has been felt for some law to regulate human life; and hence, perhaps, the common notion that every man's *experience* should be a law unto himself. To perceive the fallacy of this doctrine, we have only to reflect for a moment how far it will go, and what habits it will justify. It is precisely the doctrine which used to be applied to ardent spirits. It is the same doctrine which is now applied to fermented drinks. Every man in the community grew up from infancy with the impression that these drinks are *good*. It was a doctrine which the child was bound by every motive of filial piety to adopt, for it was enforced by the precept and the example of the parent. Gradually the habit of using them, in larger or smaller quantities, crept over him; and, here is the grand secret of the delusion, he who had formed the habit of using them, never made a fair trial of doing without them; and it was not until that trial was made, that the spell of the enchanter was broken, and the redeemed slave opened his eyes to the delusion under which he had been laboring. Thanks be to God, that delusion has passed away! The physician no longer prescribes *alcohol*. Millions who once thought it necessary, now do more and easier and better work without it. The mind, the soul, the heart of all society has sprung up with an energy for generations unknown, now that this incubus is removed. All this, you will say, is an old story. It is an old

story ; and I would not insult your understandings with a repetition of it, were it not that the same experience is now pleaded to justify pernicious physiological habits which was then pleaded to justify the use of intoxicating drinks. The experience was a delusive one then ; may it not be so now ?

We grant that a person in the habit of using, for instance, fermented drinks, feels better with them than he does without them, when the change is made for a short time only ; we grant that the habitual cider-drinker's dinner relishes better, and is digested with far less uneasiness, when diluted with his accustomed beverage, than when taken with or without pure cold water. So also will the spirit-drinker, the tobacco-chewer or smoker, and the opium-eater affirm. These substances, spirits and opium at least, all admit to be hurtful ; and all that the experience of those who use them proves, is, that man, who is the creature of habit, may gradually contract positively bad habits ; and while he is really far less healthy, and far less happy than he would be if freed from them, has yet been so long under their dominion, and has brought his whole system into so artificial a state, that he never deems it possible that he may be in a better condition. The slave has worn the chain of bondage from the cradle. He never knew what freedom is, and therefore he cannot prize it. Is slavery less a curse, or freedom less a blessing ? Can the habits of man make evil good, and good evil ? And when the Creator has fixed upon certain products the stamp of his unchangeable curse, and has established between them and all animal life such constitutional relations, that they are,

under all circumstances, poisons, shall weak man stand up and affirm that his experience contradicts the decisions of the God of nature, and that his practices shall hurl defiance at the Omnipotent ?

But we shall be told, and with a show of truth, that instinct is the guide which the Creator has given to all animals, and that man may safely rely upon this. The principle we do not deny. It is unquestionably true, that to every animal was imparted originally an instinct, which, while unvitiated, would infallibly lead to the best possible habits. Go abroad among the brute creation, in a pure state of nature, and it will be found that instinct never misleads them. It will invariably incline them to the use of those articles of food, and to the practise of those habits of exercise, sleep, cleanliness, &c., which are in all respects adapted to promote their best interests. And we cannot believe that man, as a mere animal, was made less perfect than the brutes that perish. But man, though made upright, has sought out many inventions. How humiliating is the thought, that since first sin came into the world, it seems to have been the constant effort of him who was created in the image of his Maker, to throw off that image, and to render himself, physically, intellectually and morally, as much as possible unlike that almost perfect being he then was ; even against his known interests, vitiating his pure instincts, and thus depriving himself of the only infallible guides to rectitude and to happiness ; and now that he has succeeded in rendering himself of all helpless beings the most helpless, he confirms himself in his transgressions, and trifles with the forbearance, and libels the char-

acter of his Maker, by charging his helplessness and his sufferings to the constitution of his nature : yea, when he has reduced himself to a depth of degradation and suffering which the brute creation, when away from his influence, cannot reach, he strangely, blasphemously affirms that his reason was given him to invent contrivances to supply his artificial wants, and gratify his depraved appetites ; to discover expedients for meliorating suffering which is a necessary penalty for the violation of the laws of his being, and to enable him to hold out as long as possible in his cherished transgressions.

“ Oh, *instinct*, thou art fled to brutish beasts.”

May we not reasonably doubt whether there be on the globe, at least in civic life, a single individual of the human species who has ever, for one moment of his existence, been under the dominion of pure instinct ? The first food of the infant has been elaborated from a system under artificial habits, and must therefore be artificial in its character. It is received by organs whose integrity has already been destroyed by the habits of the parent. We are aware that even high medical authority has stated that the quality of the food which nature furnishes for the new-born infant is not affected by the quality of the food from which, or the condition of the organs by which, it is secreted. It cannot be true. It must be a fatal error. We may rely upon it, long before we are aware of it, the appetite of the child is vitiated by the too stimulating properties of the food which even nature is forced to furnish, to say nothing of the artificial outrages which are early practis-

ed upon its delicate susceptibilities. And this system of perversion is followed up, dietetic errors necessarily inducing derangement and depravity of all the physiological habits, until the instincts are entirely destroyed, and man obtains the humiliating distinction of being the only animal which transgresses, voluntarily, the laws of his being, glories in his shame, and prostitutes the appetites which were kindly given him as the means of existence and happiness, to be the ministers of suffering and death.

We see, then, that neither experience, (which is, in reality, but the conclusions of depraved instincts,) nor instinct, until restored to its purity, can be relied upon as a safe guide in matters pertaining to life and health. Is there, then, no rule? Are we so utterly helpless, and must we continue so? We believe that man can, and will yet be brought back to the dominion of pure instinct, and that he will yet find that the highest interests of his whole being are best promoted by following the promptings of nature. Till then, he must find some other rule, under the guiding and restraining control of which he may return to the integrity of his first creation. "To the law, then, and to the testimony."

From the conclusions of a delusive experience, and from the teachings of a depraved appetite, the appeal must first be made to *comparative anatomy*. It is true that comparative anatomy throws light upon only one branch of physiology, the natural *dietetic* character of man; but upon this point its testimony is decisive. Strangely as man has departed, in his voluntary habits, from the laws of his constitution, he has not been able to change his anatomical structure. The hand of God is there still; and though

ingenuity has tried to torture man's anatomical structure into an accordance with his voluntary habits, the effort has failed; and the best anatomists and physiologists of the present day admit, though reluctantly, that the anatomical structure of man would give to him a dietetic character far different from that which has hitherto been assigned him. Here we may rest with undoubting confidence. As far as the argument from comparative anatomy goes, it is conclusive. It speaks the voice of the Framer of our bodies—a voice which the depravities of six thousand years have not been able to silence.

Another mode of determining the dietetic character of an article, is *by experiments upon animals*, let it be observed, who have never been accustomed to the use of the article. If the animal be healthy, and the article acts, in all cases, as a poison, it may be inferred that it will act thus upon all animals, whether human or brute. The entire confidence with which we may rely upon this mode of proof, is founded in the remarkable uniformity in the works of the Creator,—in his having so constituted all organic animal life, that what is injurious to the best interests of one animal, is also injurious to the best interests of another.

This mode of proof may also be made use of in determining the effect of exercise, bathing, &c. upon health and life.

Chemical analysis may also be employed to ascertain the adaptation of a given article of food or drink to the interests of animal life. This mode of proof, however, must depend, for its data, upon principles previously established; since, although chemical analysis might determine the elements of any article,

it could not affirm, *a priori*, that the properties of those elements were either favorable or destructive to organic life.

After all, the appeal must be made to *experience*. It is as unphilosophical as it is idle to convince a man that a course of diet or of general habits is favorable to his health, unless his own experience comes in to strengthen the argument. He may, indeed, from a willingness to gratify his adviser, or from credulousness or faith, be induced to try the experiment ; but unless it results, when fairly tried for a reasonable time, in benefit, he will, and he ought to abandon it. Let it, therefore, never be urged against the advocates of physiological reform, that we reject the lessons of an intelligent experience. Our reliance, under God, is principally upon the conclusions of experience ; not the experience of those who are under the dominion of the appetite, or the habit in question ; but the experience of candid, honest men, who have *tried both sides*, and are therefore competent to judge.

We admit thus, fully and cheerfully, the importance and necessity of the Baconian method of induction in determining physiological laws. There are difficulties, indeed, attending it, as there are investigation in every department of science. There is always a disposition, especially in the infancy of a science, to draw inferences from too few facts, or from facts incorrectly observed. Perhaps no one cause so much retards the progress of science, and so much produces and confirms error, as a careless and hasty generalization. Still, the abuse of the inductive method of investigation does not affect its value in the discovery of truth ; and, as in all other departments of

science, so in Physiology, our confidence in the correctness of our conclusions will be just in proportion to the number of individual facts and the accuracy with which they are observed.

Here then, we have the law and the testimony ; and there is no discrepancy in their evidence. If experiments upon living animals, or the anatomical structure indicate that a particular article or practice is injurious, an intelligent experience will invariably arrive at the same conclusion. Thus do the laws of God, as discovered by science, and the works of God, as going on in nature, beautifully harmonize.

If, while insisting upon the uniformity and universality of physiological law, we are pointed to the fact that the same article of food or the same practice produces entirely different effects upon different individuals, and are told that if there be a law regulating these matters, here at least is an exception, it may be answered that the exception is only an apparent one ; that the whole difference is undoubtedly to be referred to the different voluntary habits of the individuals or their ancestors—to perhaps a thousand circumstances which we are apt to overlook, all of which are yet tending to modify the effect upon each. But are there no idiosyncracies ? Yes, all civic life is full of them, and they abound just in proportion to the artificial habits of society ; and hence it is fair to infer that that they are not the work of nature—no more the peculiarities of original constitution than the drunkard's loathing of food, or the morbid cravings of the dyspeptic's stomach.

The great object of physiological research, then, is to establish the principle that life and health are

subject to laws. It will follow, by consequence, that man is constituted capable of ascertaining those laws, and that obedience to those laws will infallibly secure health. Here is our confidence ; not an atheistical trust in the power of law, but a firm reliance upon the faithfulness of our kind Father in heaven. We believe that His word and His promises have never failed, and that they never will fail. We believe that it is eternally true that "the way of the transgressor is hard ;" and we believe that it is also eternally true that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," and that in the simple act of "keeping His commandments, there is great reward." We believe that in the whole universe of God there is not a single exception to the principle that just in proportion as a man obeys or disobeys the laws of his being, will he receive the blessing or the curse ; and we would humbly and earnestly devote our best abilities to discovering those laws. We would be saved alike from the impiety which would charge suffering to the arbitrary infliction of Divine Providence acting without regard to law, and from the presumption which would claim for its hasty conclusions an unquestioned infallibility. We want light—we want truth ; and we are sure that the truth will triumph, and we invite and will hail its triumph, though it cover us with confusion. It matters little what becomes of the humble individual who addresses you ; it matters little what becomes of your society, if the truth prevails. And it will. A spirit of inquiry is abroad, which shall not be stayed until the redemption of man is accomplished. It has no fellowship,

on the one hand, with a conceited contempt, or, on the other, with a superstitious veneration for an opinion which our fathers adopted. It applies the same test—the law and the testimony, to vulgar prejudice and fashionable error. It can be deceived neither by the chicaneries of an irresponsible quackery, nor by the dogmas of a legalized empiricism. Who shall stay such a spirit? Who can set bounds to its triumphs? It came from heaven and it tends to heaven; and it will never, never be extinguished until it has brought man back to his allegiance to his Maker; until it has led the long-suffering prodigal back to its father and his father—to its God and his God.

There are indeed many obstacles in the way of the final triumph of physiological truth. There is the iron power of habit to be overcome—habits which have become almost a second nature; which a delusive experience leads the individual really to believe to be necessary to his welfare. The relentless despotism of appetite is to be resisted; and what makes the work of individual reform more difficult is, that these habits and appetites take a stronger hold and more entirely deprive their victim of voluntary agency, just in proportion to the injury they are working. It is a depraved appetite alone which is so capricious in its demands. The pure appetite relishes whatever is adapted to the wants of the system. If an apple is presented, it is satisfied; if a potato, it is equally satisfied; and, while, of course, it has its preferences, they are neither so capricious nor so obstinate as to interfere with enjoyment. But how different with the miserable victim of a depraved

appetite. Deprive the drunkard of his grog, the tobacco-chewer of his cud, or the coffee-drinker of his cup, and in bitterness he will exclaim with Micah—"Ye have taken away my Gods!" and the more concentrated the poison, and the more rapid the work of death upon the system, the more imperative are the demands of the appetite, and the more closely does the victim hug the destroyer. And if you should, by any means, induce an individual to renounce his bad habits, there comes another and more terrible trial. There is the prostration which necessarily follows the abandonment of bad habits—the almost perfect anarchy of the system; and this too is in proportion to the depravity of previous appetites and the pernicious effects of previous practices. It is true that these derangements are just what ought to follow, and are such as always do follow every change, and without which it might well be feared no good would be effected. There was never a revolution yet, even the most happy in its results, the temporary consequences of which were not precisely such derangement and apparent injury; but it will require a large amount of faith in the opinion of the adviser, or a strong confidence in the principles of physiology, to secure perseverance.

Another obstacle in the way of physiological reform will be found in the interests of those whose crafts are assailed. As man departs from the simplicity of his nature, and as his artificial wants are multiplied, he becomes more dependent upon others for the gratification of those wants; and hence arises an artificial necessity for a multitude of trades

and professions, which, when viewed honestly, are but expedients to gratify, and, in the very act of gratifying, to perpetuate the low appetites and passions of our animal natures. They are all founded upon the depraved habits of society, and draw their own life-blood from the vitals of the community. They play into each other's pockets and stand or fall together; and when an effort is made to redeem man from the thralldom of low appetite and debasing lust, when philanthropy and religion would awaken man to a consciousness of the dignity of his nature, and point him to the high destiny which may await him, when this their craft is in danger to be set at nought, in the overflowing of a holy and disinterested indignation equal to that of the Ephesian silver-smiths, they will shout—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

The progress of physiological reform will be retarded by the indiscretion of its friends. In every new cause there are some who are governed more by authority than by reason, common sense or the teachings of an intelligent experience. They are mere man-worshippers, and bring no independent judgments of their own to the cause; and, catching at a single feature of the system, and giving to that an undue importance, they run into strange mistakes, make shipwreck of their hopes, and bring reproach upon the truth. And, unjust as it is, yet it is always the case, that a cause is judged by the conduct of those few individuals whose errors are in no manner the result of the cause they have espoused except that it furnishes occasion for the exhibition of pre-existing peculiarities. Let the truth of physi-

ological principles be tested by the effects which they legitimately produce, and we are willing to abide the test. We invite, we challenge the ordeal; but we are not willing that a cause which we believe to be of God should be judged by the inconsistencies of its advocates, or be charged as the cause of evils which are, in truth, the result of the very errors it aims and tends to correct.

I cannot enumerate all the obstacles which impede the final triumph of physiological truth. Nor is it necessary. Go back to any reform which has been attempted since the introduction of Christianity, and inquire the reception they have met who have assailed any long-established error, any time-honored prejudice, any darling appetite or depraved habit, and on the page of history we may read the trials of truth; and, blessed be God, on that same page we may read its triumphs. Always, it will be found, reform encounters at first every thing but just that which its advocates invite—calm investigation, free discussion, and dispassionate argument.

The present struggle with the hydra, Intemperance, will be a more protracted one than any which has preceded it. To use language which has been applied to the temperance cause, "the reform is reaching those who are better able to defend their favorite appetites and habits." Again, philanthropists have hitherto attempted to stop only a single stream of iniquity and suffering; and the confined waters have burst forth with more violence in another direction. What progress have we made in individual or social reform, if abstinence from ardent spirits purchases a license for unrestrained indulgence in

wine, beer or cider? or if all alcoholic drinks are abandoned, and the same unnatural craving is perpetuated and gratified with tea and coffee? Nor have we gone a step farther, if even all these are relinquished, and unconquered sensuality still revels in debasing gluttony. True physiological reform strikes at the root. It demands the abandonment of every practice injurious to health. Its principles prove that all our voluntary habits are matters of vast importance—that the selection of proper food and drink is not a subject which we may carelessly turn over to our cooks, and tell them we will eat and drink whatever is set before us; but it is a question which intimately concerns our happiness and our usefulness; upon the decision of which depends, under God, the health of the body which God made to be the tabernacle of an immortal spirit, and between which and that godlike spirit He has established such intimate yet mysterious sympathies that the one cannot exhibit the almost miraculous energies of which it is capable unless the other is treated according to the laws of its constitution.

To bring man back to the integrity of his nature will require a constant correction of bad habits, a constant resistance of depraved propensities, and hence, at first, a constant self-denial. It is true that in the beginning it was not so. When man was pure, obedience was natural; and the unpolluted senses received from the legitimate objects of their gratification an exquisite delight, to which the pampered palate of the epicure is an entire stranger. The first act of transgression must have been a forced one, doing violence to the undepraved instinct

and visited with immediate suffering. Strong indeed must have been the mysterious temptation which led to that first fatal act—so mysterious that it has puzzled philosophers and theologians in all ages to account for it. But when once the work of depravation was begun, the course was a downward one; and now the return must be upward, and, at first, painful. This will not, however, continue; for when once old and bad habits are eradicated and new ones implanted, every thing goes on smoothly again, and what was commenced from a sense of interest or duty, is continued from inclination. And yet how many are deterred from all attempts at physiological reform, because it will put them to so much trouble. “This living *by rule*—it makes one so odd.” They can send to the ends of the earth for delicacies for a fastidious taste, and luxuries for a depraved appetite. The sailor must brave the perils of every ocean, and toil and suffer and die beneath a tropical sun in every longitude; the unholy, accursed system of war must be sustained to protect a commerce, the almost exclusive business of which is to procure products which, to say the least, are perfectly unnecessary: industry never tires, enterprise never droops, capital is never wanting, human life is freely spent to procure that delicious poison, tea, from the supercilious serfs of the “Celestial Empire,” or those others, coffee and spices, from “India’s coral strand,” or from “the spicy shores of Araby the *curst* ;” sea and land are compassed, and their innocent and happy tribes of beast, bird, fish, and insect are cruelly murdered, to glut the unnatural thirst for blood; ingenuity is exhausted to devise new modes of cooking the re-

volting materials, and of tempting the palled appetite to the horrid repast ; and woman, aye WOMAN is the doomed slave, the “born thrall,” who must submit to all this drudgery, must fritter away her immortal mind, force all her thoughts and feelings and associations into this one channel of sensual gratification, and degrade herself to a mere kitchen scullion, to tickle the palate of her lord and master ; and when the penalty of all this transgression, long delayed, it may be, but inevitable—when the richly-deserved penalty comes, and the outraged and jaded organs obstinately refuse to perform their functions, the doctor is called, and medicine to any extent, no matter whether science and experience, or ignorance and recklessness administer it, is willingly swallowed ; and if nature partially recovers from the accumulated outrage, and the doctor advises to visit the springs or to take a sea voyage, again no expense is spared and no trouble is deemed burdensome ; and thus days and months and years of weariness and anguish are passed ; and all this is done without a murmur at its inconvenience or a doubt of its necessity. But, say a word to the suffering patient or gluttonous epicure about attention to the dietetic and general habits, urge the necessity of every family’s being provided with the means of bathing, talk about the importance of vigorous and uniform exercise—“Oh, it is too much trouble.” Yes, it is too much trouble to employ *preventive* measures. It is too much trouble, by correct habits, to guard against and avert suffering ; but when sickness comes—in other words, when the accumulated outrages upon nature take away the powers of locomotion, no pains, no expense is deemed

troublesome in trying to *cure* the evil which a few hours of self-denial might have prevented. How fatal and yet how common is the opinion that strict rules are important for the invalid ; but that it would be an "insult," to insist upon the observance of such rules by "the robust and healthy." In the name of common sense we ask, which is the better course—to let a man, by bad habits, induce disease and then try to cure him, or to teach "the robust and healthy" how to prevent disease? We do not ask which would be better for the doctor, but for the patient. Which is the wiser course for the sailor, to take a chart of the shores, rocks and quicksands which lie near the track of his voyage, and keep as far as possible from danger? or ignorantly to venture upon an unknown sea, or recklessly dash among breakers, and when his vessel thumps upon a rock or is thrown upon her beam ends upon "a stern and rock-bound coast," and while masts are snapping and canvass tattered and every timber groans and trembles beneath the gale, to call the carpenter and order him to repair the wreck?

It is reasonable to believe, that if mankind could be brought to devote to intelligent efforts at prevention a tithe of the attention which they now give to attempts at cure, one half of the work of physiological reform would be accomplished. It seems, indeed, almost hopeless to require it. There are few, probably, whose attention has been awakened to the importance of correct physiological habits, who do not experience, every day and hour, the difficulties of resisting the temptation to indulge in that which is known to be injurious. On one side there is present,

positive gratification ; on the other, future, and we flatter ourselves, doubtful suffering. Reason points to the penalty ; but appetite suggests that possibly, probably, undoubtedly it will not, in this case, be inflicted ; and then “ it can’t make much difference, this once.” We plead, with Lot, that this one darling desire may be granted—“ Is it not a little one ? ”

The seen and the present, influence us far more than the unseen and the future. We cannot appreciate the worth of prevention, because we do not value blessings until we are deprived of them, and because it is impossible that we should know from how much difficulty prevention saves us. We offer large rewards for the apprehension of the thief who has robbed our dwelling ; but we render no thanks to him who invented locks and bolts ; and yet how much property and life have those simple contrivances noiselessly and unpretendingly preserved. Suppose two travellers, about to pass over a tract of country filled with hidden pits, should each select a guide, and each should agree to reward his guide, at the end of the journey, in proportion to his services. One of the guides permits his employer to take his own course ; and himself follows carelessly along, until he is aroused by the cries of the traveller sinking in a slough, and in an agony of fear exclaiming, “ Save me—save me ! ” The guide sees that it is time something was done ; and, animated by the hope of reward, and by a nobler feeling of sympathy, he puts forth every effort, and, by means of the ropes and poles and planks, which he had providently brought with him, in anticipation of some catastrophe, and perhaps at the peril of his own life, he draws him

to land. The heart of the traveller is full of gratitude to his preserver, and he feels it a pleasure to remunerate such services with princely prodigality. The other guide faithfully tells his employer, before starting, of the dangers which lie in their path, and then cautiously goes before him, keeping, if possible, out of the very sight of danger. The traveller is, indeed, often inclined to wander, and insists that there can be no harm in a little deviation; but to all his entreaties the guide has but one answer: "I know the way; I have selected the best possible path for you, and if you wander in the least, you do it at your peril. I only know that you are safe in this path; but I cannot predict what will be the consequences of a single wrong step." They go through safely, without having even seen danger. Now, which of the guides will receive the warmest thanks and the largest fee? Undoubtedly the first; and yet the second deserves far better of his employer. There is indeed no comparison in the services rendered. But the second traveller will very probably say, "I don't believe, after all, that there were any bog-holes there. I didn't see any, and I believe I could have come through just as safely without my guide as with him;" and his thanks will be cold and his compensation niggardly.

Just so it is in matters of life and health—just so it is, indeed, in every thing relating to the future and the spiritual. We condemn such want of forethought and precaution in other matters. The coach-driver who should neglect to repair a weak place in his harness or his carriage until it broke, thus endangering the lives of his passengers, would at once be

set down as unworthy of patronage. . The manufacturer who should not see that every gudgeon and bearing were kept oiled, and every weak belt strengthened, and every failure anticipated, and, as far as possible, prevented, would be considered shiftless and unqualified for his business; but with a machine so fearfully and wonderfully made as the human system, every thing goes at hap-hazard, and the whole business is to break down and to "patch up."

This disposition to neglect the means of preventing disease is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of physiological reform; and the only hope of final success is in establishing the principle that human health and life are subject to laws, and in leading men to rely less upon present feelings and more upon principles. And yet how almost hopeless is the task. Although to those who have investigated the subject, especially to those who have applied to it the test of their own experience, the principles of physiology seem perfectly reasonable, and their application safe and pleasant; yet to most of the community they really and honestly appear absurd and dangerous. It is perfectly idle to recommend to them an exclusive vegetable and water diet. They look with mingled emotions of pity and contempt upon an individual who sits down to make a meal upon plain bread and fruit; and if the plain liver speaks of the gustatory enjoyment he receives, if he affirms, as all who ever tried it will affirm, that he never before knew the deliciousness of food to a pure appetite, he is at once pronounced to be under the Grahamic delusion.

Let a pure liver sit down to a breakfast of dry

bread and cold potato, and the *bon vivants* will regard him as an ascetic, doing penance. They cannot conceive how he can muster the self-denial to take up with such fare ; and for breakfast too—the very time of all the day when they want hot food and drink. “Well, that must be a dry breakfast.” It would indeed be literally a dry breakfast to them, and they cannot understand why it is not equally dry to the plain liver. The fact is, they have been accustomed to the use of stimulants and condiments with their food, until their salivary glands have been brought into such a state that they will not act without their wonted stimulus. Eat a piece of dry bread, without even butter ? They would be obliged to chew it and chew it ; and unless they could mix it with some oily substance, or dissolve it in hot coffee, or at least in cold water, they could not possibly get it into a sufficiently diluted state for swallowing. The mouth is indeed as dry as a millstone. The whole digestive organs, in a state of torpor and exhaustion necessarily resulting from the stimulating habits of the preceding day, refuse to act until they have been goaded up by one or two cups of hot coffee : the salivary glands, long accustomed to the stimulus of pepper, mustard, salt, &c. will not pour forth their natural fluids to dilute the food ; and if such a person should be doomed to make a breakfast without his dear coffee or butter, or some tolerable substitute—especially if he could not procure a glass of water to wash it down and thus cheat the stomach of the only fluid which nature ever intended should enter it with the food, the best he can think of doing is just to worry down enough to sustain life until he

can get back to his flesh-pot, or his grease-pot, or his coffee-pot, and then, (his parched mouth almost waters at the thought,) then a plenary indulgence shall compensate him for this self-denial. Is it strange that such an one listens with incredulity to the assertion of the pure liver that his breakfast tastes good? It contradicts his experience; and if he believes the assertion, it only goes to establish his favorite position,—“What is one man’s meat, is another man’s poison.”

“Why,” says he, “I should feel like death, if I didn’t have my coffee at breakfast and my tea at supper. I know that coffee and tea are good for me; I have used them twenty years, and if they had hurt me, I should have found it out before now.” My dear sir, did you ever try to do without them? “Yes, I tried it once fairly—I didn’t taste a drop of either for three days, and I almost died, and I verily believe I should have died, if I had not gone to drinking them again.” Well, but isn’t it possible that you did not try long enough? Can you expect that your system should recover in three days from the unnatural habits which you have indulged twenty years? When the whole current of your life has flowed so long in an artificial channel, is it reasonable to suppose that it will in a day return to its natural channel? “But what is the use of talking to me about what I know? If tea and coffee are poisons, why wasn’t I poisoned to death twenty years ago? And how should you know what suits me better than I do?” You are probably aware that slow poisons may be gradually wearing away the energies of the system and shortening life, and may, by

imperceptible degrees, so deaden the nervous susceptibilities, that they shall fail, by spasms and convulsions, to give monition of the work of death. And it makes but little difference as to the result whether an individual, little by little, fritters away and squanders his constitutional energies, so that they will not sustain life so long by ten years as they would have done under a prudent husbandry, or whether, ten years before his life would naturally have closed, he produces by a powerful dose of poison, or by the razor or a halter, instantaneous death. Whether each case is alike suicide and each alike morally guilty in the sight of God, are questions for casuists; I speak only of the certainty of the results. Besides, the rum-drinker uses the same arguments which you use. He has drunk his pint of rum a day for forty years, and he believes, he knows he is no worse for it. Besides, he once did without for a week, and felt languid and sick, and miserably inefficient the whole time, and he was obliged to return to his grog; and the first glass he took put him on his legs again; and he triumphantly appeals to you—"Don't I know what suits me?" "There—that's just the way with you, Grahamites. You say tea and coffee are as bad as rum—I won't talk with such a man." We say no such thing. We only say that the rum-drunkard uses precisely the same arguments, and with apparently as much sincerity, to justify his habits as you do to justify yours; and we only suggest that as he is most sadly deceived, so it is possible you may also be deceived. All that we ask of you is to make a fair experiment of abandoning those articles you sincerely consider thus necessary; try

it intelligently, and sufficiently long to get your system entirely free from the artificial habits under which it is now suffering ; and if you do not realize all and more than all that we affirm, we will never trouble you with another word upon the subject.

A few days since, I was conversing with a friend upon the use of flesh meat, and he affirmed, as usual, that a vegetable-eater could not do so hard work as a flesh-eater. He was a total-abstinence temperance man ; and I asked him—Did you ever think ardent spirits necessary to a laboring man ? He saw the dilemma into which he was thrown, and answered—“No.” I pressed the question. Did you not think fifteen years ago that you could do more work with ardent spirits than you could do without it ? He was obliged to say, “Yes.” You were mistaken, then ? “Yes.” Then perhaps you are now.

All that is necessary, is to get people to make a fair trial of a plain vegetable and water diet and a proper general regimen. And yet this, reasonable as it seems, is one of the most difficult things in the world. Advise a young lady to rise early and take a walk or a ride, or to jump rope, or to take any vigorous exercise before breakfast. “Oh, I can’t. I feel so weak that the least exertion overcomes me.” In the name of common sense we ask, why is it that people feel so shiftless and so crusty when they first wake up ? Why is it that the birds wake up to a loftier flight and a sweeter song ? Why is it that the whole animal creation starts up to a renewed energy and elasticity as it springs from the arms of

“Tired nature’s sweet restorer, balmy sleep ?”

Why is it that thus the playful gambol, and the blithe carol gladden field and grove with the assurance of a resurrection to a new life ; but man, alone, clings to his luxurious and enervating bed, and when he comes forth, he comes languidly, mopingly, without one feeling in unison with the general joy ? Strangely, indeed, has he perverted himself, if sleep, kindly intended by his Father in heaven to restore his exhausted strength, fails to refresh and invigorate. And yet how common it is to hear people complain in the morning ; and how common it is, when a child wakes up crying, for the parent to say—" Oh, he isn't waked up yet ; he has just had a nap." Now we ask, when of all times ought a child to be good-natured, if not after a nap ? But the difficulty is here, as in a thousand other cases, people have so long found it to be a *fact*, that themselves and their children do wake up crusty and cross, that, without once thinking that it is entirely unnatural and only the result of bad habits or wrong treatment somewhere, they take the fact for a law, and conclude that it must be so. " It is natural to have the eyes stick together, and it is natural to have the headache in the morning. They slept too soundly ; (what a melancholy condition !) or they didn't sleep soundly enough." Any reason or no reason but the true one—bad habits and bad treatment.

The young lady who is so confident that it does not suit her to exercise before breakfast, has fallen into the same common error of mistaking a fact for a law. It is lamentably true that most persons do feel unable to take exercise early in the morning. The young lady clings to her bed until the last minute,

and rises just in season to put on a morning-dress and perhaps, or perhaps not, dips the tips of her fingers in water, and, weak, languid, with no appetite, sits down to her cup of coffee. With a stomach in such an almost perfectly torpid state, that it will not act without the stimulus of a cup or two of hot coffee; with a whole system in a state of exhaustion, the necessary result of the stimulating habits of the preceding day and evening, she cannot conceive that she could ever have in the morning that keenness of appetite which correct habits and those only stimulants which nature needs, air and exercise, invariably give; and thus it is, that when the slaves to stimulating and enervating habits witness the elastic movements and listen to the merry songs of the pure liver, it so contradicts all their experience, that it is set down at once as "confirmation strong" that we are under the Grahamic exhilaration. Yea, so uncommon has it become to wake up with the freshness and buoyancy of spirit which ought always to follow sleep, that we are taught in childhood that it is dangerous to indulge such feelings; and poetry has been called in, to confirm the error, in the familiar doggerel almost as sacred as Mother Goose's Melodies:

"Sing before breakfast, cry before supper;
Dance before breakfast, die before supper;"

and thus the warm and gushing spirit of childhood is kept in check, until artificial habits have dried up that fountain of gladness which would otherwise have poured itself forth as freely and as beautifully as the playful antic of the lamb, or the blithe carol of the lark.

There are many errors in physiology, which, long received as truths and endorsed by high authority, would yet, if for one moment viewed in the light of common sense, appear absurd. Perhaps the most prolific source of these errors is the making of feeling, instead of principle, the guide in matters of health. We all know how uniform has been the practice, in times past, to permit consumptive patients to take just such food as they pleased. "Oh, it is the lungs that are diseased, not the stomach!" Just as though the lungs were in another part of creation from the stomach, and there were no connexion, no sympathies between them. What would you think of the man who should make a swing of a rope in which there was one place held together by a single thread; and when you should represent the danger of putting any weight upon such a rope, he should say—"Why, don't you see the rope is strong enough down here, where you are going to sit; the weak place is up there." Of course, you would regard the invitation to take a swing upon such a rope either as an insult upon your understanding or an attempt upon your life. Just so in the human system, if there be a weak point, every burden is borne by and injures that.

There is another view in which the inconsistency and danger of making the feelings of the patient the guide is very obvious; and yet the error, although contradicted in other things even by those who adopt it, is almost universal. Let a patient, with an external abscess, consult his physician, and a light diet is recommended. Why? Because he *sees* that high living, as it is called, inflames it. But if the abscess

should be on the lungs, the advice will be—"Eat and drink just what the appetite craves. If you can think of any thing which would taste good, you can have it." Indeed a "generous" diet is insisted upon. Is there not a manifest inconsistency? If a man has an ulcer on the great toe, he must avoid all food which would tend to aggravate it; but when an ulcer is formed or tending to form on the lungs, when the very citadel of life is assailed, stimulate the lungs to a rapidity of action which shall forbid the possibility of a healing process, and vitiate the blood by tempting the capricious appetite with all the abominable compounds which ingenuity can suggest or depravity crave; and when the acrid humors have concentrated upon a weak point of the lungs and thus an outlet is formed which, just in proportion as it prevents the effects of the pernicious food from being visible externally, is aggravating the suppuration and draining the energies of life, when all the physiological abuses flow into this one channel, and thus confirm the short-sighted delusion that the stomach needs no care, outrage is added to outrage, and, stimulated, intoxicated, murdered, the victim is hurried into an untimely grave.

Is this fancy? No; too many of us can say, in the beautiful language of Byron—"The picture is not drawn from imagination, but memory—that mirror which affliction dashes to the earth, and, looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied."

How many at this moment in our land, loving, lovely and beloved, who have barely been able to "climb the May hill," are, under this same fatal treat-

ment, descending rapidly into the tomb. Could we wave for a moment over our land the enchanter's wand, and present at one view the varied scenes of domestic anguish which consumption is causing—could we picture to you that painful alternation of hope and fear, that sickness of heart arising from hope deferred, the growing conviction of utter hopelessness, and the stern consciousness of irreparable loss and insupportable loneliness, it would present a spectacle which must prompt to earnest inquiry if there be no remedy. When Minos, the tyrant of Crete, demanded the yearly sacrifice of fourteen Athenian young men and maidens, the whole Athenian community was aroused, and justly; and Theseus, who delivered his country from the bloody tribute by destroying the Minotaur, was rewarded with the admiration and the gratitude of his countrymen. How full of gratitude must the hearts of those parents, especially, have been, who, as they looked upon their loveliest children, reflected that, had it not been for his artifice and valor, they, too, in succeeding years, would have been drawn as victims for the monster. And yet, not fourteen, but hundreds of our young men and maidens yearly fall victims to the destroyer, Consumption. Is there no hope? Shall no modern Theseus be found to point to trembling parents and doomed children the only way of escape from the impending destruction? And when such an one does offer to the victim the only clue which can guide safely out of the labyrinth of suffering, must it be rejected, and he hooted as a dreamer?

We may sleep over this subject, but we cannot

alter the melancholy fact that the victims of consumption are multiplying most fearfully every year. Our parents or our grandparents will tell us that in the days of their youth a single case of consumption, within the whole circle of their acquaintance, was a very rare occurrence ; but now it may be said of New England, with almost as literal truth as it was said of Egypt after the infliction of the last and most terrible curse, "There is not a house where there has not been one dead." Must this number continue to increase in a ratio which in a few generations will depopulate the land ? There is a remedy, and, under God, the only remedy—a knowledge and an observance of the true principles of physiology. It is admitted that consumption is incurable by medicine ; none but the reckless quack attempts the use of it in such cases. The only hope, then, is in the use of preventive means—such means as an enlightened physiology alone can suggest. If the efforts of this society should tend to establish these truths—that there is no necessity for this awful destruction of human life, that it is entirely owing to bad voluntary habits, and that when the causes, which lie thus entirely within the range of voluntary action, cease, the effects will also cease—the blessed consciousness of having been the means of saving so much loveliness and worth, were a sufficient compensation for all the ribaldry of vulgar prejudice, for all the ridicule of flippant sciolism, and even for the coldness of honest ignorance.

But we are told that consumption is hereditary. We believe that there is a great deal of error upon this subject, and that when the principles of physi-
 ology

ogy come to be understood, it will be found that death from hereditary causes alone is far less frequent than is now supposed. We do not deny or doubt that there may be hereditary tendencies—predispositions to peculiar diseases transmitted from parent to child. There are few of us who have not seen sad proof that the iniquities of the fathers are thus involuntarily visited upon the children. But it is a question, and a question to which the ipse dixit of any man or of any profession does not furnish a satisfactory answer, whether these tendencies may not be entirely counteracted, or, at least, in a great degree resisted, by early and assiduously correct physiological treatment. We frequently observe families in which one or both of the parents have died of consumption, and the children, one after another, have followed or are following them to the grave by the same disease. The popular solution of the case is that they inherited the disease. Now, that their might have been, in the children some slight hereditary physical conformation predisposing to that disease, we do not deny; but we suggest whether it would not be more rational to account for it by referring it to the habits of the parents rather than to hereditary influences. The children have been trained under the same dietetic and general habits with the parents. These habits induced consumption in the parent, and it is but natural to expect that they should induce the same disease in the child. Of one thing we may be certain, that wherever such predispositions are discovered, the sooner counteracting influences are exerted, the greater is the probability that the constitution may be invigorated and life pro-

longed.—A similar solution suggests itself of the common occurrence of a fever going through a family, and of the extreme liability of particular families to particular acute diseases. This frequently happens when no local cause can be detected; and it seems to be the most rational explanation that the whole family, having by similar voluntary habits brought their systems into similar physiological states, some trifling local cause or perhaps simply the accumulation of physiological abuses, brings on a fever or a dysentery upon some member of the family, and the rest being similarly predisposed, and the result being aided too by unusual labor, anxiety or fear, the disease runs through the whole family. Whether there be philosophy or common sense in these suggestions or not, we long to see the notion exploded that so many diseases are necessarily hereditary. So fully is the opinion now adopted that it operates strongly to create and perpetuate the very evil for which it attempts to account; and when once a parent or one or two of the children of a family have died of consumption, the first symptoms of illness in a surviving child, or brother, or sister, are regarded by the patient and friends as the precursors of inevitable death, and gloomy forebodings invite and feed and fasten the disease. We would go to the desponding trembler with words of encouragement and hope. Reverently would we repeat the reproof and the assurance of Jehovah to the children of Israel, originally, indeed, applied to spiritual transgressions, but founded upon and exhibiting a general principle in the divine government; “What mean ye that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, say-

ing, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the LORD GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, if he have walked in my statutes and kept my judgments, he shall surely live, saith the LORD GOD."

How prone we are to satisfy ourselves with mere words. Go to a person who has periodical attacks of the sick-headache, bilious turns, foul stomach, or any of the "ills which flesh is *not* heir to," and ask him the cause—"Oh, I'm *subject* to it;" and it is unnecessary to add another word.

Time and your patience would fail me, were I to attempt to enumerate the popular physiological errors, and the objections, founded on them, which are made to physiological reform. The majority of them spring from what is called experience; but, though very plausible, when closely examined, they are at once seen to be unfounded in truth. An individual *feels* that this or that is good for him; and it is perfectly idle to try to reason with feeling. Talk to a free eater of flesh or of stimulating food of any kind about breakfasting at six, A. M. on plain vegetable food, and eating nothing more until 12 or 2, P. M.—he will tell you it is perfect nonsense to advise him to do it. He should feel such a faintness, such a gnawing at the stomach about 10 o'clock, that he could not work or do any thing without a luncheon. And if you assure him that the correct vegetable eater never experiences any of this faintness, and attempt

to explain to him that a meal of plain vegetable food, when the system has got free from stimulating habits, will enable a man to work two or three hours longer than a meal of stimulating food—that indeed, from sound physiological principles, it must be so, he will cut short your argument with—“It may do for you, but it won’t do for me.”

Thus also, we may attempt to reason with one who is in the habit of taking tea in the afternoon. About 4 o’clock, the feeling, not of hunger, for the stomach is half full of the half-digested dinner, but of languor consequent upon the stimulants used at dinner, or the craving for the accustomed stimulus, commences ; and by 5 o’clock it is irresistible ; and, true as the magnet to the pole, the aching void points to the tea-pot. There is a gnawing there which nothing else can satisfy. A few cups of the dear delicious poison do satisfy it ; and therefore tea is good. The conclusion is just as logical as that which the 4 o’clock dram-drinker draws from similar premises. It is useless to reason with the appetite. The only hope is in inducing the individual to try abstinence until the system is brought into a healthy state, and he will find, invariably, that he will enjoy better health, and that the article which he honestly thought necessary to his welfare and his happiness, was only and wholly an injury.

I will not detain you with a list of physiological errors. Their name is Legion. Would that the whole host might be compelled to take up their abode with swine, with which animals alone, it would seem, they must have originated, and to whose habits they are congenial.

But we have no reason to expect that the reform will be accomplished by a miracle. Every reform that has ever been effected, has been effected by human instrumentality—feeble and despised, indeed, at first—but ultimately, in the might of truth, triumphing over all error. All that is wanting is free discussion, kindly conducted—the love of light, and the light of love. We invite controversy with no man. We oppose error, and we advocate truth—error, by whomsoever adopted ; truth, with whosoever supposed interests its prevalence may threaten to conflict. If it be possible, as much as in us lies, let us strive to live peaceably with all men. Nothing can be gained by arraying against the reform any class of men, especially if they are popularly respected and influential. But may we never compromise principle in a truckling subserviency to popular opinion, or make merchandise of the bodies and souls of our fellow-men, by yielding to their prejudices, pampering their appetites and pandering to their lusts. While we are anxious to avoid unnecessary differences, let us never forget that just in proportion as we adhere, in our practices, to correct physiological principles, we shall promote our best interests ; and though, for the sake of peace or with the hope of gradually bringing others into our own path, we may relax from the strictness of physiological rule, and partially adopt the habits of others, let it be remembered that we do it at the expense of some of our interests, either more or less important. It is painful to differ from others, especially from those we love ; but if we feel that our health is a talent for which we

must give account to our final Judge, shall we dare to trifle with the laws by which it is governed ?

When once a few great principles are established, the remainder of the work will be comparatively easy. The grand principle, the key-stone of the glorious arch of temperance, that human health and life are governed by law, must first be established. Connected with this, and, indeed, necessarily resulting from it, are the truths that man is capable of discovering and applying these laws—that, the human constitution being the same under all circumstances and all existing differences being entirely owing to different voluntary habits, the same general principles of physiology apply to the whole human race, and that health will be promoted and life prolonged, exactly in proportion as their laws are obeyed.—The idea, that disease is natural to the system, must be exploded. Rather let us rest assured that our kind Father in heaven intended we should enjoy *health*—that whenever there is any derangement of the healthy functions, it is owing to wrong somewhere within the region of our voluntary habits, and that this wrong may be and ought to be at once corrected, and, in future, avoided. We must not be ashamed to attend to “little things,” in relation to our health, keep a constant watch of our habits and feelings, and whenever there is a symptom of the slightest illness, it is our interest, as wise, and our duty as accountable beings, to inquire what has caused it, and avoid its repetition. No reasonable man, will allow injury to accumulate upon injury until the compensating economy of the system is exhausted, and the constitution is entirely prostrated. If we reflect that every viola-

tion of the laws of health inflicts an injury really irreparable, the system never recovering the full vigor which it would have possessed, if those laws had been obeyed, we shall not neglect any one of those trifling things, the aggregate of which constitute health and happiness. We know the popular doctrine is—"Think nothing about your health, and you will do well enough." It is a fatal doctrine, and we would reverently thank God that it is fast falling into disrepute.

We are not thus negligent in other matters. Suppose a manufacturer should hear some unusual thumping in any part of his machinery; would he be satisfied with saying—"Oh, no matter, the mill is 'subject' to such occasional thumps?" and would he wait until half a dozen cogs are broken out, or the fragments of the machinery are flying about his ears? No; if he were wise, he would say at once—"Shut down, and don't start again until you have discovered the cause of the trouble, and have remedied it as far as possible; and in future avoid it." But when we hear such a thumping in the curious machinery of our frames—when a head-ache, or a stomach-ache or a rheumatic twinge kindly warns us that something is wrong, we take no notion of the monition, until bye and bye down we go, and then we call the doctor, and "patch up." It is impossible to determine how large a proportion of sickness and premature death might be prevented, if mankind would thus attend to the first approaches of disease, and resist them and learn to avoid them, not by indiscriminate drugging, but by a return to the path of rectitude from which they have wandered. And yet we are

told—"We must be sick. Sickness is *sent*, and we cannot escape." If sickness does thus come upon us, irrespective of our voluntary habits, and if no means can be used to avert it, we ask, in the name of insulted reason, why use any means to regain health? If means will not avail to retain health when possessed, is it reasonable to suppose that they will avail to regain it when lost? Why have a doctor? Why not, at once, surrender all into the hands of Providence, and dismiss the subject with the fatalist's impious doctrine—"If it is decreed that we shall recover, we shall."

Far, far from us be such impiety. We love to recognize the hand of Providence in every event; but it is a Providence who works *by means*—who never acts partially, arbitrarily or revengefully; and who, when His erring children refuse to be won to His arms by kindness, draws them back by leaving them to suffer the necessary penalty of their own voluntary transgressions.

Is this infidelity? No; it is the doctrine which magnifies the law of God, and humbles man. It is the doctrine of the Bible—a doctrine which lies at the very foundation of physiological reform, that all suffering is a consequence of *sin*—of transgression somewhere. We can never feel a twinge of pain, but it has resulted from the violation of some law, a law, too, which might have been as easily, yes, more easily obeyed than disobeyed. We may be assured that all the arrangements of Providence tend to happiness. Go over the wide world, and wherever we find any of the creatures of God obeying the laws of their being, we find happiness—uninterrupted happiness.

And though poetry has hallowed the sentiment and a morbid piety has greedily adopted it, that "man was made to mourn," we cannot endorse such a libel upon the benevolence of our Creator. We love to think that our merciful Father loves his children; that he intended that they should be happy, even in this world; and that he would lead them up to himself, not by the dreary and thorny road, which, in their mysterious depravity, they have themselves darkened and planted with thorns, but by a path strewn with the flowers of cheerful obedience and enlivened by the presence of an approving God. We love to go back to the innocence and the bliss of our first parents; and as we reflect that it is voluntary transgression alone which has converted that paradise of delights into a vast charnel-house of blasted hopes, and blighted affections, and faded glory, we will dream, aye, we will cherish the blessed assurance that the favor of God may be regained, and that the weary wanderer may be brought back to purity and peace.

I cannot glance at any farther means of bringing about this glorious consummation. Men must be induced to think, feel and act, cautiously and humbly; but intelligently, conscientiously, fearlessly. Our hope is mainly from the rising generation. We dare not, if time would permit, even enter upon a discussion of this subject. But if we could make our voice heard by every parent in the world, we would say—As you value the happiness of those who are dear to you as your own lives, as you prize the welfare of society and man's spiritual and immortal interests, apply the principles of an enlightened physiology to

the training up of the children whom God has given you. Trifle with your own interests, if you will and dare ; yield whatever you please of your own happiness to the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eye ; but oh, force not upon them the depraved appetites and artificial habits which are to you, unconscious though you may be of it, a daily thrall and a curse ; fasten not upon their free spirits, the yoke of a galling bondage ; barter not their noble birthrights for a mess of pottage.

It would be pleasing to dwell for a moment on the final triumph of physiological truth. Glorious, indeed, will be the consummation, when, Physiology being regarded in her true character as the hand-maid of religion, they shall go on, hand in hand, working out the redemption of man. The separation of the interests of man's physical nature from those of his intellectual and spiritual natures is as impossible as it is unnatural. An immense amount of moral power is now wasted in attempts to reform the external conduct, while appetite and passion and lust are fed and nurtured and goaded to ungovernable prurience, and, like the central fires, frequently burst forth in scorn of the feeble restraints of misdirected philanthropy. The causes of human depravity lie deeper and in a different direction from that in which they have been sought. But the light is dawning. We expect it, we wait for it ; we foresee its meridian brightness. Peace shall return to the earth. Social intercourse shall not always be made up of the jarring of discordant elements and the clashing of conflicting interests. Harmony shall again reign between man and his brother, and be-

tween man and the inferior creatures. This earth shall not always be an Aceldama—a field of *blood*. How blissful the period when man shall go forth among beast and bird, not to be shunned as their tyrant and their destroyer, but to be hailed as their friend and benefactor ; when, as once in Eden, the now timid hare shall leap for his caress, and the trembling dove shall nestle in his bosom ; when the soaring eagle shall feed from his hand, and the crouching tiger fawn at his feet. Is this an enthusiast's dream ? No ! When the time and energies, now wasted in the development and the indulgence of the animal, shall be devoted to the elevation and the gratification of the spiritual, it shall all and more than all be gloriously fulfilled.

“ For we may have a world as fair
As God has made it kind.”

But more glorious results shall flow from the triumphs of Physiology and Religion. When man has learned that there are higher sources of enjoyment than his animal nature affords, and nobler faculties to be developed than the low appetites—then life, even life in this “ vale of tears,” shall be, as it was designed to be, a daily blessing, and the object of life will be to form those habits of thought and action, and to cultivate those affections which shall be continued and perfected forever. And death, too—how shall it lose its terrors, when it shall be regarded, not as the termination of one existence and the commencement of another, but as the casting aside of the cumbersome *exuviae* of an imperfect state—simply as a natural event in an unbroken series of obedient

and happy existence. Thus the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and the obedient child shall go forth to meet his Father in the daily walks of business or study, with filial confidence;

“Where’er he treads, ’tis haunted, holy ground.”

His spirit communes with a present Deity. In the beautiful language of Paley, “The earth henceforth becomes a temple, and life itself one continued act of adoration;” and death is only a kind messenger sent to call him to the temple not made with hands; and he

“Will go, not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach his grave,
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

